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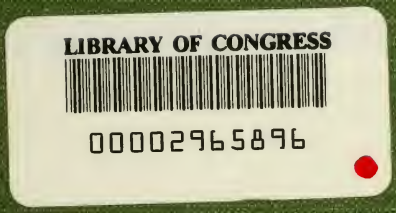

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THE CHARTER OAK.

THE CHARTER OAK,

And other Poems.

BY JOHN JAY ADAMS.

NEW-YORK:
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INTRODUCTION.

In submitting this little book to the public, the author will not attempt an apology, nor endeavour to forestal criticism. A brief statement, however, of the circumstances which gave rise to the leading poem, and induced this publication, will not, he trusts, be deemed impertinent.

The author had very frequently wondered why, at the present day, amongst so many poets whose talents are of a commanding order, so little had been written in a heroic strain, when the age was teeming with such extraordinary developements, and the reminiscence, — even of a day, — was fraught with associations so well calculated to enkindle enthusiasm.

In perusing the Columbiad of Barlow, he was for some time at a loss to discover why the work was a failure ; for in the Vision of Columbus he found passages possessing striking merit, and which indicated the possession of very considerable requisites for the production of a national poetical work. He found the reason: — Barlow attempted the Epic ; hence his genius was not only put under restraint, but condemned to a

slavish servility not compatible with the spirit of the age, nor with the appropriate treatment of a subject so novel, and so expansive. The frequent newspaper paragraphs, recording the passing events of the day, as connected with science and the arts — the progress of civilization — the rapid though silent and happy changes to which the whole world is submitting, — present more material, if read, — and rendered, — in a proper spirit, for high-wrought poetic indulgence, than aught which the pages of prior history can furnish.

During a voyage across the Atlantic, the author was led to think more seriously on this subject, by the perusal of a volume of poems which happened to make one of his *compagnons du voyage.* The volume was that of Grenville Mellen, whose name has such a deserved rank among the lyric poets of the age, and in whose Martyr's Triumph and Buried Valley, he found a towering beauty of thought and appositeness of versification, which, while they charmed, caused a feeling of regret that the display had not been made on subjects of a more tangible nature, equally inspiriting to the writer, and more easily understood by the world at large. The author, while attempting to review that volume with the design of expatiating upon its beauties, and enlarging upon the views he had assumed, was interrupted in a moment of banter, by a request on the part of his es-

teemed friend, Captain Morgan, to write something about the Charter Oak. Designing it as a mere dinner bagatelle, he struck off a stanza; but he found that the feelings with which he was possessed, would not permit him to treat the matter lightly. Hence arose the Charter Oak, as it originally appeared in the N. Y. Mirror; and hence, with some few additional circumstances, which he solicits to be excused for relating, sprang this little work. The alacrity with which Gen. Morris published the production, and the kind expressions which he lavished in a way that rendered them substantially serviceable, added to the flattering announcement of his then associate, the accomplished C. F. Hoffman, Esq., he must confess somewhat stimulated him to presumption; but they who will read must concede that it did not carry him to any seriously taxable lengths. He felt his weakness, his inefficiency; yet, he mourned more that they whose education, pursuits, and talents, gave the qualifications, did not embark on so glorious a sea, than at any failure on his part in attempting to embody the glowing imaginings, crowned by a more glowing reality, which were continually in his companionship.

From one whom with delight he calls his friend — who is duly appreciated only by those who know him best, he received the following tribute; and although conscious that

the feelings of the critic were merged entirely in the amiability of the man, he cannot refrain from presenting it here. To Samuel Woodworth, Esq. the author is indebted for the following, which was published in the Evening Star:

"SWEET is the strain thy lyre has woke,
To eulogize that monarch tree:
A happy theme that 'Charter Oak,'
It forms a fadeless wreath for thee.

"Yes, thou art brow-bound with the Oak,
And long its verdure shall remain:
Not won in battle's vengeful stroke,
But by sweet poesy's tuneful strain.

"And I would rather wear that wreath,
Than any blood-stain'd garland known.
Still bid thy lyre such numbers breathe,
And fame shall claim thee for her own."

The well-known editor of the N. Y. Gazette, whose critical judgment is so universally appreciated, in speaking of the production, said that he "really did not see that it had much to do with the 'Old Tree,'" but suggested, when tendering some highly valued compliments, "that it might be eked out to an Epic, or a moral and didactic poem as long as Young's Night Thoughts." The author *has* eked out the poem; yet

he feels that he has but reached the threshold. There he is constrained to pause. Engaged sedulously in active mercantile pursuits, to which he has been inured from boyhood, with some, occasionally protracted, interruptions, it is doubtful whether he will ever again resume the pen with the intent of invoking the muse. By circumstances he was forced over the hedge into the literary field; and although his right to wander in it has never been, to his knowledge, seriously questioned, he, with the most perfect sincerity, declares a conviction of his inadequacy there to range, with any desirable advantage to himself or his fellows. Yet, he is vain enough to hope that the tone of thought in which he has indulged, may take effect upon some master spirit, and hasten the day when the good and great of our land shall acknowledge the influence of soul-lifting poetry, struck from a harp whose inspiration shall prove alike an honour to our country and a glory to the world.

Dedication.

TO ROBERT R. BOYD, ESQ.

Dear Sir: —

To you I would respectfully dedicate this volume. A portion of the leading poem, as originally published, was inscribed to Capt. Elisha E. Morgan, whose suggestion gave it origin, and to whom for many acts of courtesy I shall ever feel indebted.

But, unto you I owe a tribute. The highest gratification I can derive from any success which may attend the public reception of this little offering, must result from the consciousness that it will then be more generally known with what feelings of deep gratitude and devoted regard,

I am your friend, and ever obliged servant,

THE AUTHOR.

New-York, August, 1839.

The Charter Oak.

Again I greet thee, Ocean, in thy smiles,
And mark thy gambolling in rainbow crest;
Freed from the earth and its ensnaring wiles,
I gaze, and feel that with thee I am blest,
As sinks each torturing thought that e'er my soul opprest.

I gaze upon thee when at twilight's eve
Thy waves do seem to speak in humble pray'r;
While, like fair flowers, they gently take their leave,
No longer dallying with the inconstant air —
And, sympathetic, feel a rest for all my care.

I mark, in wonder, when with fearful dash
You break, as though the bark you would o'erwhelm;
In anger calling to the intruder rash,
Who dares to wander o'er thy virgin realm,
While rush the seamen bold unto the uncertain helm!

I've gazed upon thee in each change so grand —
Thy *quiet* is a grandeur — all confess ;
Though then so distant seems the heart-sought strand,
The friends we seek, perchance love's fond caress,
And all which our most cherished feelings bless.

I've gazed upon thee, and, like those of yore,
Who did with *life* imbue thee, I have thought,
That e'en from out thy multitudinous store,
All fair things on this earth, perchance, were wrought,
And in old time, save thee, existed naught.

Whence sprang that thought — in what soul-searching mood,
Was he who brought the fancy into birth ?
High mused he as he looked upon the flood,
While standing on the fairest spot of earth —
That no alluvial show'd, or atmospheric dearth.

Those wild imaginings — how dear they are —
Mind was their dictate — who shall say they're wrong ?
They could not stoop unto the skeptic's fare : —
To being, glory, poesy, and song,
All things they gave which to our earth belong.

To being, glory, poesy, and song,
Fain would I give all things which reach my lay;
The blissful thought how rapt I would prolong,
That all shall waken to a brighter day,
And bask — transcendent thought! — in Heaven's eternal ray.

What joy is fellowship unto that mind,
Which bursts the cerements worldlings cast around;
To see in peace its kindred and its kind,
Complacent look beyond this narrow bound —
Nor thus to view can e'er with holy joy be crown'd.

And once, when cheerful rose the heart-fraught lay,
I caught my sea guide's strange perplexed smile —
I mark'd the change when tears did silent stray,
And he, as though my sorrow to beguile,
In kindness ask'd — what thus my thoughts did wile?

"My song, sir Pilot, gratitude inspir'd —
For on the mercies of my God I thought,
And my full soul, with holy rapture fir'd,
Those feelings vented that were overfraught,
With thankfulness for bliss so heavenly wrought;

For all secure, as in my now sought home,
Upon this fitful ocean I was borne,
While not a thought to low desire could roam —
No action vain, o'er which the contrite mourn,
And which, full oft, so mark the spirit torn.

Content and plenty with me and around,
How could my heart repress the joyful lay?
Yet, as I pierced yon verge in circle bound,
Why should you marvel that the tears did stray,
When to my vision came the woes which throng the way?

See where yon tall bark helplessly is rolling —
Those looks of agony — how dreadful — look!
The knell of death o'er all is fearful tolling —
Can you that sight of horror calmly brook,
Which e'en the soul of Nero might have shook?

Can you survey it and not bless your God
That thus serene you move upon the deep?
Come now with me and bless the chastening rod,
Which breaks guilt's thunders, and gives quiet sleep
To those who o'er their wayward follies weep.

Mark you that little and that fragile bark!
A mother and her child are on the wreck —
Heard'st thou that shriek? Unto that moaning, hark!
The father, dying, totters to the deck: —
Relentless death his victims ne'er may reck.

Turn there — oh God! what horror harrows now,
Thy stricken heart as fearfully they close!
Those icebergs round that moveless, fated prow —
Those rending yells, those mad, despairing throes —
And, if thou canst, seek for thy night's repose.

Yes, thou *may'st* seek, and calmly close thine eyes,
If to thy God the heartfelt prayer ascend,
That, while thy soul does all his blessings prize,
To those thus stricken for his unknown end,
His boundless grace in mercy may extend."

I sought my couch, yet e'er sweet sleep did come,
From beauteous lips a lay rose on mine ear;
'Twas she, the wanderer from a happy home,
Whose every tone 'twas ravishment to hear:
And broke that tribute strain as were no list'ner near.

"Alone, now alone, on the billow,
How sadly my thoughts do return;
To droop like some low moaning willow,
That weeps o'er a worth cherished urn:

Bright crested the waves now are voicing,
A welcome of joy to their home;
Unheeded by me's their rejoicing,
As far, far from thee I do roam.

But soon shall our fleet bark, returning,
In sympathy wreathe the bright foam,
While each element gallantly spurning,
That checks the embrace of my home.

On our favourite seat when you listen,
The wind in tempestuous roar,
Think my eyes then, with pleasure do glisten,
For I am nearing our dear native shore.

And when, with a hushing commotion,
The waves sing a fond lullaby,
Think, that o'er that beautiful ocean,
They bear thee my heart's dearest sigh."

Once more the deck. — Ye denizens of earth,
Who make the throng upon the busy mart —
To you this scene would nothing prove but dearth;
For nature and her glories, where's your heart?
Alas! full soon you'll mourn in them you had no part.

Then with a bluntness none but sailors know,
For meet with them it seems as courtly phrase,
Our Pilot, as he paced to and fro,
And wandered, thoughtful, to his boyish days,
Thus spake: — "Come, give this day unto thy idle lays."

I was at peace, for all around was joy.
Our bark seemed dancing on a gleeful sea,
No sight or sound my feelings to annoy.
"The subject, now, sir Pilot, give to me,
And with it, fain, will I in buoyance toy."

"Sing of the Charter Oak!" he quick replied. —
What swelling thoughts upon my mind arose,
As to the days men's souls that nobly tried,
My feelings rushed! but how might I disclose
Such wond'rous deeds — such heart-conflicting throes.

In stanza weak the muse awoke the strain,
Her country's glory rose above the verse;
Clogg'd, not enfeebled, broke she from that train,
And thus essayed the great theme to rehearse.

Back to those days when eastward went the ark,
My spirit turns — and with thee would commune,
Thou monarch tree! — and worthy of thy crown;
For hands of freemen placed the simple guard
That marks thee from thy fellows — monarch tree!
And I would ask, when ceased the waters' rage —
How look'd this land, emerging from the waste,
O'erspread in vengeance of a God incensed?
Look'd it as now? Did this calm, gliding stream
Roll in its course as beauteous? hill and dale
Such fascination spread? But, chief, I'd ask,
Who first they were the manly strain that woke
A sound, in sylvan scenes, which should be dear,
But which too oft upon the air doth go,
More fear-fraught than a forest-monster's yell!
Whence came they? How allured — or hither driven
By still rapacious and insatiate man?
Lived they in peace amid these quiet scenes?

Rose from their hearts a thrilling chant of praise,
To the great power which gave such heritage?
Did the low rustling of the forest leaf
Attune them to the music of the boughs,
And lift their thoughts unto a holier sphere?
Did the calm flow of fertilizing streams,
Now murmuring soft, and now in wavy sound,
Tell of the riches of their crowning banks,
And lure them unto culture? And the hills—
Sought they the lawn with patriarchal zeal,
To bid the homesteads rise in shadowy land,
Made consecrate to fellowship and love?
Surveying the wide prospect, did they mark
Its beauties with enthusiastic glow—
As in the midst their fair and handiwork
Waked in each breast the patriot's hallow'd pride?

Ah, no! such were not they, who,—wandering,
Lured, or driven,—did first the echoes wake
Of this, then vast, unbounded solitude!
Fear-fraught the sound they sent along the gale—
Their dreaded whoop rang but revenge and blood—
And well might speak the lineage accurs'd
Of him who first uprais'd the murd'rous hand!

No thrilling chant ascended in meet praise —
But savage notes of wild, exulting joy.
And the low rustling of the forest leaf
No feelings woke, save when the practised ear
Knew, in the sound, the victim or the prey!
On this fair stream then whirr'd the light canoe,
To speed the hunter, or the warrior fierce;
Its swelling banks no culture then display'd —
Nor from the lawn arose the homestead dear,
To cheer the husbandman's contented toil.
Theirs was a nature not to be subdued
To arts of peace, and calm domestic joy;
No holy words of ministering zeal
The darkness of their ignorance dispell'd —
Revengeful, rude, and savage still they roamed;
And, slighting Nature in her courtship bland,
Proclaim'd the ban of Heaven was on their race!

In the far east, behold, the veil was rent!
And, now, emerging from unholy gloom,
Which, for long ages, shrouded her bright fane,
O'er the wide land, Religion's purer ray
Resistless sped! Her bland and blessed beams
A high intelligence to man disclosing —

His duty, glory, destiny, reveal'd !
Then rose his thoughts, from grovelling passions free :
No knee then bent, but when the thankful heart
Or contrite mind, with penitential warmth,
Pour'd forth the frequent orison and prayer.
All worship due, and given to God alone !
Yet in the land the leaven still remained —
Still damned pride and superstitious arts
Over its rulers held their baleful sway,
And, on those pious men, who walked in light,
Oppression fierce, and darkling vengeance fell !

On that far land bright shines the western star —
And, from the cliff-bound shores, a band proscribed,
Whom persecution drove to worship there,
Mark'd the effulgent kiss it gave the wave,
As gloriously it sank to grace the clime,
Broad-stretched and beautiful, on ocean's bound.
Then woke the throb — the heaven-inspir'd desire,
To tempt the dangers of the bounding deep !
Light in the scale its snares and whelming rage,
Compared to man's — their fellow and their foe !

Bright-plumed in faith, they take their winged way ;

And, from the portals, smiled those heavenly guards,
Who erst beheld, across chaotic waste,
The arch-fiend hurrying to his work of wo,
With sin and death, and all their horrid train.
These, from the gardens of that eastern world,
O'er the wide main now take th' uncertain path,
And wheresoe'er their weary feet may rest,
New verdure springing mid unwonted bloom,
Shall speak the joys of Paradise return'd,
And bliss new-born, through man's repentant tears!

Though rude the gale, and dread the surges roar,
On the drear depths the pilgrim-freighted ship
Her course pursues where guides that lustrous star,
Regardless of the elemental strife,
Which well might seem old trident Neptune's throes!
For the rapt strains then rising to the skies,
His doom pronounced — his empire's homage o'er!
And thus outbroke the choral's triumph sound —

Roll and roar, thou vex'd ocean!
And, ye winds, angry chide!
Mid your wildest commotion,
Securely we bide!

In the tempest's dread wailing,
Our voices shall rise —
O'er thy fury prevailing,
And reach to the skies!
Great Father, Creator, accept our rude prayer —
Thy promise to gain be our heart's only care.

Though ye now gather frowning,
Ye dark, low'ring clouds,
In your deluge-burst drowning
The moan of the shrouds!
Soon, sailing in lightness,
Like fleecy-wrought car,
Shall ye usher in brightness,
Our beautiful star!
Great Father, Creator! our praises resound —
Faint type of its glory, thus thy promise is crown'd!

Now, on the rock, a wearied, care-worn crew,
How meekly-fervent rose their grateful notes,
As Faith and Hope the wintry landscape deck'd
In smiles of welcome to that forest home!
Pause we to marvel at thy shadowy ways,
Almighty God! Eternal Providence!

Pause we to bless Him, who, unask'd, has given
Inheritance more rich than that survey'd
By Moses from old Pisgah's sacred height,
When, o'er the wilderness, the chosen seed
Rested by Jordan's consecrated stream!
Oh, sacred gift! — by blood nor rapine bought,
But won by Faith, upon whose peaceful scroll,
The red man saw — instinct, inscrutable —
The destin'd end inscribed of all his race!
And, dogged, yielding to the high decree,
In the wide-changing prospect seemed to fade.

Now farther would I ask, thou guardian tree,
How look'd our sires, when hither they repaired,
To make thy trunk the sanctuary safe
Of sacred pledge which tyranny would wrest?
And, when thy quick'ning shoots in tendril curls,
Clos'd with paternal care around the trust,
Did not each glance flash in the bold belief,
That freemen's rights are safe in heart's of oak?
Such glances flashed in lightning o'er the land
When Lexington sent forth the alarum sound,
Nor ceased until the last, long trumpet-peal

Died 'mong the hills, which, in true royalty,
More proudly tower'd when all around was free!

Leave we the past, the recent, wond'rous past,
To meditate on that approaching time,
Which broadly now its shadows casts around,
How swells the heart in lofty contemplation,
When its high musings waft the raptured mind,
To dwell on those bright days of promised peace,
Whose foretaste gives such philanthropic joy.
No impious work man's folly now uprears;
But elements subservient to his will,
Here yield fraternal and expanded arms —
Which, through its circuit, to the land's far end,
Urged by the subtle fluid's potent power, (1)
Brings brother unto brother, long estranged.
And there, upon old ocean's untracked wild,
The lordly palace speeding in its pride,
Makes brief the pathway unto shores remote,
By happy art in close communion brought,
The world, ere long, a fellowship shall own —
All feuds forgot — and peace forever reign.

Haply when still the vernal air shall give
It's quiv'ring mantle to thine honour'd trunk

Delighted groups, here lingering, may tell
How gloriously shone forth our parent isle,
Since in her clime oppression ceased to dwell.
How o'er the land, "from Indus to the pole,"
Her arts prevail, her language swayful speaks,
Awhile religion — from her altars kindled —
Doth from a thousand sister shrines proclaim
The earth subdued in brotherhood of bliss.

Oh for a prophet's voice again to urge
Fall'n man unto his long forgotten way;
Fain would I heard him like an ocean surge,
No more amidst a wilderness to stray,
To seek, and aye to find, a bright, a heavenly day.

Blest day! which sought what joy the soul doth fill,
In vain each gloomy terror calls to yield: —
No demon power the ecstacy can chill —
Can from the contrite wrest their heavenly shield,
When breaks thy light upon the well-fought field.

Great God! to thee in humbleness we bend,
Our march is onward, prove thou still our guide;
A holy interest to the age now lend —

For see in grandeur o'er the cowering tide,
The ocean steamer moves in strength and conscious pride.

Of her we sang in brief prophetic strain,
And mingled glories with her triumphs van;
Again the muse would wake the bold refrain —
'Tis not for rhyme such lofty themes to scan —
And thus her daring notes she'd pour again.

While fresh the trace the wild enthusiast made (²) —
At least so deem'd by those who will not soar;
Behold, how beauteous comes the crowning hour,
Not dimly vision'd in his recent theme.
Speeds not the lordly palace in its pride —
Dawns not the day when peace shall ever reign?
Oh, Poesy! no longer thou'rt the maid,
Sporting with Naäids in their murmuring streams,
Or revelling with the Dryads in the glade;
Far less we find thee now in Paphian bowers,
But, like Minerva, on the world thou break'st,
Crested in pride of wisdom and of art,
And marshalling man unto that conflict bright,
Where mind and love the blissful contest hold.
Vain was thy art e'en when of Ilium's towers,

Of Hector, and Achilles, and their train,
In strains sublime the bounded minstrel sung:
Or when Æneas sought the Latian shore:
What sang they but of black revolting deeds,
And following still but in a wanton's train —
For Helen, Dido woke the glowing song —
Else to Augustan ear gave sickening lay —
The muse, poor pander, and the muse ashamed,
Handmaid in art to cruelty and vice.
No Pegasus can now the bard avail,
Or airy rambling on Parnassus' height:
To the dark Past he now but gives a look,
Then hastes to plume him in the glorious train
Borne so invisibly throughout the world.
Mysterious power! what marvel fills the soul
When we survey the varied, wond'rous ways
On which thou bear'st incredulous passive man,
To the bright haven of his promis'd peace;
Theme inexhaustible, yet I, presumptuous
And wayward ever, seek to weave the strain.

Now nears the time when England's virgin queen
In her gay court shall homage smile return
Unto the flower of Europe's gathered pride —

Perchance the last of all such pageants vain,
Whose gewgaw glitterings shall debase the race
That speak the swelling language of the free —
And thine that language, cherish'd parent isle,
Ere long to be the language of the world.
Yet, lady, favour'd, happy in thy crown,
The muse, while sternly truth doth guide her flight,
Would fain thy laureat prove, and dip her wing
To gild thy days in the reflected hues
Of a whole nation happy in thy smile.
Brief time, the tilt and tournament were there —
And nodding plumes in graceful dalliance wore,
The gallant squire, and th' high-bounding steed,
The lance well pois'd, lip press'd, and flashing eye,
Proclaimed the cavalier for lady love.
While the poor minstrel, lowliest in the train,
Sang of bold deeds to condescending ears,
His muse awak'd to worse than sensual strains.
And now are gath'ring round thee, mighty queen —
Mighty indeed, for love's thy base of power,
The beauty and the bright of Christian climes ;
The chivalry which shall thy splendour grace,
Thrice happy queen, — the chivalry of mind. —
Hereditary rank still holds its sway,

And still its long accustomed station fills,
Unheeded though to pass the gazing crowd,
If mind or virtue shine not on its crest.
Not mine, fair isle, in bold excepting tones
To speak dispraising thy ancestral pride,
Yet must I utter, as the full thought urges,
The proud belief, that rapid hastes the time
When lineal state shall quiet yield its sway —
E'en as I've marked, in twilight glittering West,
A lazy cloud — its sombre body deck'd
With a bright fringing of the Iris dyes,
Dissolving in a flood of chastened light —
Then every star sent down its proper light,
And chiefly Dian, mistress of the throng.
Prove thou, fair queen, the Dian of the world,
Bright in thy station may'st thou constant move,
Thy God reflecting with a ray divine.

To the Far West now hies the impatient muse —
With lightning speed, ark follows upon ark,
As though the world were disemboguing there.
Where shall we rest, or where pursue the theme?
The mind, which erst on fiction's pinions floated,
There revels in reality's romance.

What bounds to reach, or to define the power
Of the vast change few rapid years have marshall'd,
Belongs to those, who, o'er their fellows favoured,
With heaven-touch'd eyes the glowing future scan. —
Immortal Clinton! were thy grasping mind
Again confined to frail debasing clay,
How would it leap to reach that consummation
Which in brief distance on its gaze would break —
Though vaguely seen by all the world around —
By those who toil but in lowly labour,
Or those who stand erect in artist pride :
Little they deem who make the angle sure,
Or those who elevate the humble spade,
What glory shall accompany the train
For which so busily they smooth the path.
Like a young traveller bounding with desire
To see the varied beauties of the world,
Irresolute where first his steps shall wend,
The muse, as breaks the wonders of the age,
Though in their dawn — so circling are the lures —
Scarce knows how she her new-fledged wing shall plume ;
Since, high, or low, far round or far beyond,
All things that greet her wrapt ennobling gaze,
Invite her to a soul careering flight.

And see where now in brightest radiance flashing,
Each hill-top cresting and each valley cheering,
The light of liberty spreads o'er the land —
Now speeds the time when freemen *shall* be free,
When the unfettered mind, each shackle rending,
Shall make the present to the smiling future
A handmaid prove; with such bright jewels decking,
That all the world may here in homage throng —
For to the Future — unto it alone,
Must boasting man look for his present pride —
But that o'ershadowed, darkling sinks his soul.

My country! and in this discursive strain,
I will invoke thee in thy majesty,
And offer up the soul incited prayer,
That thou, with rulers worthy of thy empire,
May, by thy great unparalleled example,
Wake in the emigrant an emulation
To nobly *win* a station midst our sons.
Brief time, Heaven smile, this strain may be renewed,
To sing the praises of our patriot bands,
Who, scorning all political device,
Not rulers, but co-labourers shall prove,

And swell the sober triumphs of that land,
Where Eden's garden erst its fragrance gave. (3)

No hireling words have ere disgraced the bard,
And now the patriot feeling must have vent.
Ere long the chosen of this favoured land,
Will treat of themes that shall each bosom swell:
Leaving all selfish, low, intriguing schemes,
How will they joy to trumpet our high destiny —
Point to the Rocky Mountains' natural gorge,
And trace the rail-road to its farthest bound;
Thence, with a Colden's, Fulton, piercing sight,
The steamers see stud the Pacific wave —
No idle dream — nor even idle that,
Which views New-England's ever hardy sons,
Make nought of China's famous Tartar wall:
There shall our language urge a healthful sway,
While now, its blessed and enlightening influence,
Through Birmah, Hindostan, and Polynesia,
Doth waken man unto his better attributes,
Yielding a rich reward to Christian toil.

Could I but utter in a high-wrought song,
The feelings o'er my bursting soul that steal,
How rapt would I the lofty strain prolong,
Bringing vain man his humbleness to feel,
As each low thought I'd nakedly reveal.

Lowly I'd bring him, to exalt him higher,
No more — conventional — should he depend;
But, breaking from his thraldom, catch the fire
Which still upon his lip will e'er descend,
When he hath sought his true — his only friend.

His God! — start! and ye may, ye selfish, sneering crew,
If chance you flaunt upon the imbecile verse,
Oh may the Almighty to your contrite view,
Those blessings bring you now would make a curse,
Then the pain'd muse no more your misdeeds might rehearse.

But from the rhyme — concluding — let me turn,
Its fetters suit not an outpouring soul;
O'er man's high destiny each thought doth burn,
The muse, impatient of the weak control,
All art-sought measure would, though feebly, spurn.

But, stay the tear for still degenerate man —
Neglectful of his high ascending powers,
And of his ministry in God's high providence —
Bowing to Cain-like and degenerate art.
How may we judge the value of his toil —
How, nature's triumph by that toil achieved —
For still mysterious are all her ways —
May give a guerdon, where we see a curse?
Though Art and Nature ne'er run parallel —
Art's great perfection lies in her concealment,
While Nature stands revealed to all the world;
And where her beauties most she doth disclose,
Her worshippers, with reverence, most admire.

Had Homer or Euripides ne'er wrote,
Who at this day the Stagyrite would know?
Vain art — poor critic art, that genius binds —
Compelling to the slave's oft trodden road,
When Nature, through her glorious expanse,
Invites to stray, and o'er her boundless realm
Such beauty sheds the glowing heart to win.
Did Shakspeare, Byron, deal in classic lore?
Pause on the page, and be the question ask'd.
Archimedes his lever well might boast;
That lever, was the lever of the mind.

Discursive still to Texas, now we'll roam;
And oh what thoughts the miracle awakens,
As the Alamo's bloody field ariseth,
And San Jacinto's wonders are displayed.
A miracle — a heaven-wrought miracle —
A hastening of that bright, that blessed day,
When all the world in brotherhood shall bow.

Pause — heedful pause, and be the question put —
What but Almighty power, and for great ends,
Could give such triumph to that little band,
Opposed by those — and on their border soil —
Who dared defy the universe in arms?

From them the smile of heaven is aye withdrawn,
And scarce a century shall rapid flee,
When not a vestige of the sensual crew
Who sparsely spread that wide and rich domain,
Shall live to weep o'er degradation past.

What though the reckless and the wild did press,
To make the invited footing on that soil —
Do not their records tell of glowing hearts —
Do not their acts speak of great minds reclaim'd?

If Cortes swept the land in her best days,
Urged on by bigotry and lust of gold —
When Montezuma swayed in eastern pride —
Say, what shall stay the onward course of these
When heaven doth smile, and righteous vengeance leads ?

Shades of our ancestors ! — inspired band !
Who gave th' impetus to that deep felt power,
Which may not rest till all the world is spanned, —
Come, kindly hover, and my soul renew ;
The gift impart to speak in fitting strain,
Of the bless'd days which to my vision come.
And chiefly, Franklin ! thou wouldst I invoke,
Who with thy bright and penetrating ken,
Didst languish for a length of earthly days,
The unfolding wonders of our land to view.

Onward, still onward moves the hardy race —
The Anglo-Saxon spirit still is there !
A heaven-sent talisman by them is borne.
It waves — the desert blossoms as the rose —
It touches, and the mountain lowly sinks,
While rise the valleys to a bliss-fraught light.
Enervate superstition's fear-brought train

Shrinks at the sight and howls a last farewell ;
Again Tolteca's waste in smiles is drest,
Her lofty pyramids and silent cities
Now find their solitude forever broken ;
And could they speak, in trumpet voice they'd tell
Their joy to stand as monuments reclaimed,
Amidst a race who worship with free hearts.
Still onward where Carribea's beauteous sea
Doth pile her waves to feed the ocean stream,
The spirit comes — her touch divides the land,
And Atalanta, like a wayward girl,
Bounds forth to hide her on her father's breast.

In her repose, the hurricane dismayed,
Sinks back — no more those beauteous isles to waste ;
While on the borders of the pilgrim soil
New lands uprise their treasures to display. (4)
Onward, — still onward, — shall this tal'sman speed,
Till all the range, to Patagonia's bound,
With blessed influence in joy shall bend:
Diverging thence, upon a tranquil sea,
How speedily to China is it borne !
And the Celestial Empire, — falsely named, —
Like to our Aborigines, shall fade,
Or own and bless a God before unknown.

As rapid as the railroad's car doth move,
Intelligence is speeding through the world,
And not far distant is that hallowed time
When from thy seven-hill'd city, Constantine,
The muezzin sound, — the *Christian*, muezzin sound,
Shall be the signal to a grateful world —
E'en as the cannon hence to Erie's shore,
In one reverberation, proudly told
The mighty triumphs of a Clinton's mind,
When the great lakes paid tribute to the sea.

Farewell the theme: — but to thee must I turn,
Thou monarch tree! — the muse that didst awake, —
Tell of thy age — of all the varied views
Thy time, with revolution fraught, hast known.
Say why the Indian gazed on thee in wonder, —
A sacred planting by Manitou's hand, —
To stand unscathed till time hath reached her doom?
Whence came the legend? — say where is the link? —
Let it be seized, and thus connect the chain,
A chain of bliss which all the world shall bind.

NOTES.

"*Urged by the subtle fluid's potent power.*"

(1) The author when he indited this line had strict reference to the progress and perfection of the Electro-Magnetic power for practical purposes. In anything connected with science and the arts, short of perpetual motion, very few reflecting and observing men can at the present day be skeptical. It is but a light hazard to predict that the company which is, and has been, so earnestly engaged in developing this splendid principle of action, will ere long meet with a reward commensurate to their devoted zeal and untiring perseverance.

"*While fresh the trace the wild enthusiast made.*"

(2) This part of the poem was written immediately after the arrival of the "Great Western," and anterior to the coronation of Queen Victoria. It will be seen by the reader that in the portion of the work written, as indicated, at sea, the success of ocean steam navigation is adverted to with the most perfect confidence.

"*Where Eden's garden erst its fragrance gave.*"

(3) This line was suggested by some ideas contained in a letter which was addressed to the late celebrated Dr. Mitchell. The writer was a resident of Ohio, and by a series of very ingeniously wrought arguments, with sustaining facts from Scripture, he attempted to show that the garden of Eden was located in Ohio, and that Noah was a resident of that region; whence he wended eastward, to rest on Arrarat; hence another line commencing the blank verse of this book

"Back to those days when eastward went the ark."

"*New lands uprise their treasures to display.*"

(4) This passage relates to the results which would follow a diversion of the waters of the Carribean into the Pacific. The idea may be ridiculous; the event may seem an impossibility — but it is worthy of consideration. Should that immense body of water which constitutes the Gulf Stream find an outlet in the broad Pacific, the effect upon our portion of the continent would needs be astonishing. The author indulged in this, as he presumes it will be called, rhodomante, in the hope that it might elicit something from those who are scientifically qualified to treat the subject with the intelligence it deserves.

The tree alluded to in the poem, and which gives the title to the entire production, still flourishes on Willis hill, now forming the estate of Stephen Bulkley, Esq. in Hartford, Connecticut. It is distinguished as being the depository selected by the spirited colonists, when Sir Edmond Andros, in 1638, attempted to deprive them of their charter. The instrument remained concealed in a hollow of the tree until the era of the revolution and was effectually guarded from sinister or impertinent curiosity by the branches and shoots, which rapidly grew round the cavity. The tree has been carefully enclosed by a paling, and is pointed to with most justifiable pride by our Hartford brethren.

THE CHILD'S GRATITUDE.

The following lines, written impromptu, were suggested by a truly affecting scene which is imperfectly described in the poem. The letter alluded to came at a moment of great pecuniary distress, and the tears of joy which its contents called forth, awakened the apprehensions of the recipient's child, a charming little girl, only 3 years of age. On being told that the letter brought comfort, and that she should now have plenty of food and clothes, she exclaimed : "What, mother!" and her beautiful blue eyes lighted up with a heavenly expression — "shall I have plenty of victuals and clothes? Oh, mother! shall I thank God?" and immediately throwing herself into an attitude of prayer, her little soul seemed to exhale in childish expressions of gratitude. Tears fell from me such as I never before shed, and all my philosophy vanished. I sighed to be rich.

With trembling hands the seal was broke,
And, lo! a treasure it disclosed —
The mother's joy no language spoke,
For feeling's fountain then unclosed.

No words her joy could utterance give,
So fast the heart-warm tears did flow;
In comfort she again may live —
But see, that cherub's look of wo!

"Oh, mother, what afflicts you so?
Nay, nay, dear mother, do not cry!"
"My child, from joy my tears do flow,
Come, let me kiss that dew-gemm'd eye.

"The treasure which I here do find
Will bring thee food, and raiment warm ;
And midst this winter's piercing wind,
The cheering pile our hearth to charm.

"Kiss me, my child, — another kiss !
The path of gloom which long I've trod,
By friendship's ray now glows with bliss !"
"Oh, mother ! shall I thank my God ?"

Then on her knees, that cherub child,
Her little hands did thankful raise :
It seemed as if a seraph smiled,
When broke those simple notes of praise.

Could grasping Avarice behold
A scene like that I witnessed there,
No longer he'd the boon withhold,
But fly to win the cherub's prayer.

The author having occasion to execute a piece of writing, and being very much depressed in mind, withdrew from office interruption to a private room which commanded an elevated and extensive view of one of the most busy thoroughfares of our busy metropolis, where he gave vent to his feelings in the following strain. To understand it fully, it is requisite the reader should be apprized that from his lofty window he observed within a few minutes of time, a number of objects whom sympathy or charity might solace, but could not relieve. Reverting to his own feelings while in the enjoyment of good health, and with power to command every needful luxury of life, his spirit reproved him.

My God! my God! how shall I speak
The transports of a bursting heart?
Not words — oh no — they are too weak —
My *anguished* joy they can't impart.

Feelings which clog the tongue are mine,
Should speech essay — the utterance vain —
For holy awe and love divine,
Each riven faculty enchain.

Great God! how boundless is thy love —
My soul in aspirations weak,
Would every earth-born thought reprove,
And thus in heart-warm accents speak.

Give me, oh Lord! the spirit of prayer,
  Thy grace, thy mercy to implore;
Let not my wilful spirit dare,
  To count secure her present store.

The richer falls thy dew of grace,
  The humbler let my head descend,
Till mercy's sun, in boundless space,
  Shall shed its bliss — time without end.

Some years ago the author was voyaging from South America, via. Cuba. One morning the cry was heard, land ho! The captain and ourself knew not what to make of it. There was the land — but what land? Our reckoning placed us at least fifty miles distant from any. We were running nine knots through the water, and still the land presented the same unvaried appearance — no alteration whatever being apparent in distance or bearing. It seemed magical, and superstitious fear possessed several of the crew. Some hours elapsed, and still was each eye bent on this phenomenon; when from aloft the first officer hallooed, the "smoky devil." It proved to be the steamer Robert Fulton, and the magical land which had surprised and alarmed us, was the smoke from her chimney.

What headland is that on the ocean's wide waste,
  Which looms to confound the poor mariner's gaze?
Land ho! is the cry — the captain call — haste —
  He springs to the deck and he looks in amaze.

Land ho! can it be? Is dame nature in play?
See the waves, round our prow how delighted they roll,
While each lip and each feature in blighted array,
Would speak the dread earthquake's heart-crushing control.

Cheer ye men, cheer ye men, the bold captain then said —
An earthquake alone could give birth to yon land;
But though the dark omen weave fears dreaded braid,
Still we live in the hollow of heaven's right hand.

Onward, onward, still onward, the fleet bark did rush,
And still loomed the land in unvaried display;
What feelings did then o'er the mariner gush,
As of fate he beheld the much dreaded array.

While freshened the breeze, and more swift flew the bark,
That land still was seen in its dim, misty glow;
When loud, from the topmast, was heard the shrill — hark!
Of the lookout, to those who were pacing below.

Huzza boys, huzza! 'tis not land you descry,
But the smoke of a ship spurning current and air!
As near'd the bold steamer, with pleasure beats high
Each mariner's heart that had throbbed in despair.

BYRON.

Hark! 'tis the war-cry on the gale —
Awake! my soul awake —
Grecia! thy spirit I'll inhale,
While ruthless tyrants quake.

The Moslem band is rushing on,
Awake! my soul's full strung —
They paused not when at Marathon,
The Persian dirge was sung.
Hark to the sound! my heart's in arms,
I'll think of Salamis;
And revel in the rude alarms,
And seek in war for bliss.

Not where Bozzarris cheered his band,
That noble spirit fled;
Nor in the field, with blood-stained brand.
He mingled with the dead.
But, where he yielded up his breath,
The pilgrim's shrine is found;
And by the never dying wreath,
Is mighty genius crown'd.

BATTERY SERENADE.

Oh gently o'er the tranquil wave,
The sportive zephyr glides;
And in the glittering vast concave,
The moon sublimely rides:
And from yon fairy castle's height,
Soft music greets mine ear;
But lost to me is their delight —
Amelia is not here.

I gaze upon the tranquil wave,
And feel the zephyr's play;
And mark amid the gemm'd concave,
The moon's sublimer ray:
And from yon fairy castle's height,
List to the strains so clear;
But lost to me is all delight —
Amelia is not here.

Perchance upon yon orb her look
In rapture may be cast;
While musing by some babbling brook,
That tells her of the past:

The past which, in an hour like this,
To me so painful proves, —
Another now may share her bliss,
And rend the heart that loves.

LINES,

WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM OF A YOUNG MOTHER.

Behold the little prattler at thy knee,
Each look returning with a cherub's smile ;
Now, as she bounds and sports in childish glee,
Her bosom free from sin, from taint, or guile —
Say — does it not each anxious care beguile ?

And cares there are, that rudely still will rush,
When friends, when fortune, all unite to bless ;
In festal hall — by the lone fountain's gush,
They come, each buoyant feeling to repress,
The fond heart searing in their dread caress.

Oft may we mark some lowering envious cloud,
Threat'ning the storm, in gathering gloom arise,
Careering darkly, night's bright Queen to shroud —
Then, shrinking, as abashed at the emprise,
In blushes add new lustre to the skies.

So prove the cares that may thy breast invade,
Like rain-drops from the spring-cloud, smiling come —
Perennial joys be thine — no blighting shade
Awake regret — or cause a thought to roam :
All bliss be centred in thy home — sweet home !

SONG OF THE BASHFUL LOVER.

Dear maiden as fondly I've gazed on thy charms,
How has fluttered my heart in love's soft alarms ;
And oh, as I gazed, how I've secretly sighed,
To ask the dear treasure, to claim thee my bride.

How oft have I thought as I dwelt on thy smile,
That your dearly lov'd presence each care could beguile,

Which rudely assails as on life's stream we glide,
And with rapture I've burned to claim thee my bride.

Oft in transport I've thought that thy bosom did glow
With feelings responsive, I've languish'd to know;
Oh speak then, dear maiden, oh deign to confide,
That word is ecstatic which makes thee my bride.

But shouldst thou deceive me — the thought is despair, —
It turns to a desert the Eden so fair;
Where in fancy, I've roam'd, with such joy thrilling pride,
Oh rend not this bosom — say thou'lt be my bride.

LINES.

Too much of a misanthropic spirit may be accorded to this little effusion. In complying with an urgent request for its insertion here, the writer would simply express his fears that it may be found too true to be poetical.

Though I live for the world, I despise it,
Its light is the meteor's glare;
And wo to the wretch who shall prize it —
His portion is nought but despair.

Of friendship, of wealth, and of power,
Enjoyment I've had, to my cost;
For still, in each fast fleeting hour,
Th' fruition hath ever been lost.

What day dreams of pleasure still hovered—
Round my couch what bright fantasies shone;
And Hope, each defect as she covered,
Displayed Cyrethea's bright zone.

Oh how fondly, how madly, I lov'd it—
This world in its treacherous smile;
How hollow, how heartless, I've prov'd it—
Heaven shield me from wrath and from guile!

I rail—not that fortune has left me,
Her embraces I yet have compell'd;
I rail, not at aught that's bereft me,
I rail—the illusion's dispell'd.

On my brow still contentment sits smiling,
Still my accents are bland and serene:
As a flower in its beauty beguiling,
The thorns, which it bears, all unseen.

Farewell! Oh farewell, each gay vision —
In vain spread ye now the lov'd lure;
Your incitements I view with derision,
Such mocking no more I'll endure.

But yet there is rest for the weary,
Hope still broods o'er the verge of despair;
But — turn from this false world — so dreary —
Look to Heaven! — 'tis there — only there!

ODE.

The following Ode, written on an occasion of the celebration of *Washington's* Birth Day, was sung by Mr. Richings at the Park Theatre. It will appear necessary to state, that at the time of its production, the South American Continent had just fully emerged from the thraldom of Spain, with not a prospect of the dissensions and divisions which have since so seriously affected its prosperity.

Now hushed is the clarion, and pæans of joy
Proclaim that a world wakes to freedom and glory:
No more stalks the despot its peace to destroy,
Or sully the page which spreads bright with its story.
Then wake the heart's strain,
And let echo again

In rapture repeat it, from shore and from main —
It is liberty's anthem! oh swell the glad sound;
Let the chorus sublimely reach earth's utmost bound.

First o'er this blest land the oppressor dismay'd,
Heard our sires loud war cry, to the battle field rushing;
Beheld their brave legions undaunted array'd,
And shouting for freedom while life's blood was gushing.
Their memory is dear,
And with homage sincere,
Their valor and virtues we e'er will revere:
Unto them shall our hymns of warm gratitude rise,
While pleased, each bless'd spirit looks down from the skies.

And to Him, still transcendent in peace and in war,
Our heart's adoration is gratefully flowing;
He rose on the world Freedom's great polar star,
Its lustre with age e'en more brilliantly glowing.
Under tyranny's sway
As they languishing lay,
Our brethren afar caught its bright beaming ray;
Then o'er the wide main to each dark heaving sea,
To arms they sprang fiercely, and swore to be free.

Oh ! may his great precepts our hearts still inspire,
His example awaken the world's emulation,
Till throughout the wide earth man shall nobly aspire
To the blessings which flow round our well-belov'd nation.
Let all base thoughts retire,
And Liberty's fire
Glow bright in the breast of each son and each sire —
May we stand a bright beacon a world still to save,
And Freedom rise, smiling, from Tyranny's grave.

TO A COQUETTE.

WRITTEN ON A BRIGHT WINTER NIGHT.

Farewell ! forever fare thee well !
Without one sigh I part ;
And not one treacherous tear shall tell
The anguish of my heart.
Farewell ! and oh, a long farewell,
For thou canst ne'er be mine ;
Now broken is the syren spell,
Which bound each thought to thine.

Bright in her azure star-gemm'd field,
Yon orb in beauty rolls;
Yet scarce a joy the scene doth yield,
Stern winter's blast controls.
E'en so the smiles which deck my brow,
And pride will call them there,
Fall on a heart whose once warm glow,
Is chilled by cold despair.

Yet zephyr will resume her reign
When thus the scene glows bright;
And I perchance may once again
Return to lost delight.
Then fare thee well — I'll not upbraid —
Or chide the cruel art,
Which, too successfully, betray'd
An unsuspecting heart.

Farewell! and oh, a long farewell,
For thou canst ne'er be mine;
Now broken is the syren spell,
Which bound each thought to thine.

The circumstances under which the following verses were written, and the probable effect they produced, constitute the inducement for their insertion here. The author had the pleasure, when in Liverpool, some years ago, of attending a lecture of James Sheridan Knowles, the celebrated author of Wm. Tell, Virginius, &c. His subject was the Greek drama, which he treated most happily, concluding by some readings and recitations from Campbell's Gertrude of Wyoming, — Lord Ullin's daughter, &c., that were given with great force, feeling and pathos. The impression made upon the writer he endeavoured to convey in the following lines, which were indited immediately after the lecture. A copy of them which he sent to Mr. Knowles, he has good reason to believe had a material influence in urging the gifted author to the completion of that admirable play, the Hunchback.

The Atlantic billow in its ceaseless swell,
Rolls wide between me and my cherish'd home,
Whence oft as beckon'd by some mystic spell,
Would hither my young thoughts enraptur'd roam.

For still my rushing blood hath felt the power,
Which o'er the soul the mounting muse did fling,
When wandering Avon's consecrated bower,
She caught the strain no other bard may sing.

How shall I speak my bosom's mantling glow,
When patriot Tell in triumph shone the man,
Or pale Virginius from his manly wo,
Stood maddened forth in desperation's van!

And I have heard who from the historic page,
Call'd each to life in bold, inspiring lay —
Rob'd in new charms, the worshipp'd of the age,
Aye, bright to shine on their imperial way.

And all my childhood and my youth had felt,
Came rushing on me in impetuous tide —
The shrine at which in fervour oft I've knelt,
Fresh incense scatter'd as I bowed beside.

The voice of him whose muse awoke my soul,
Broke on my ear as music of the spheres —
Lone Gertrude's sorrows urg'd their sad control —
For Ullin's maid fast flow'd the heart wrung tears.

Away! away! the laurel wreath is thine —
Call to new echo thy neglected song:
Thy spirit pour on the impassioned line —
Renew the strains which shall thy envied fame prolong.

ON THE DEATH OF "L. E. L."

Thou art blest! — thou art blest —
Ere came the blight;
The ills which life molest,
Thou'st ta'en thy flight.

Fame's meteor joys were thine —
An era came;
What bliss did then entwine,
As burst love's flame.

No more can glow that flame,
Aye hushed thy song:
But thou has left a name
To be remembered long.

Farewell — oh fare thee well —
One who knew thee not,
In simple strain would say
Thou'lt not be forgot.

Long days to come the virtuoso spell,
Will strongest prove when riseth L. E. L.

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